

Town & Village of Woodstock
Town Selectboard & Village Trustees Special Joint Meeting
November 6th, 2025
8:15 AM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present Selectboard: Chair Ray Bourgeois, Vice Chair Susan Ford, Laura Powell, Keri Cole

Present Trustees: Chair Seton Mcilroy, Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn, Brenda Blakeman, Lisa Lawlor, Frank Horneck

Public: Keri Bristow, Roger Logan, Sarit Werner, Jessica Kirby

Staff: Eric Duffy, David Green, Chris O’Keeffe, Greg Fullerton, Kathy Avellino, Stephanie Appelfeller, Robert Densmore, Charlie Degener

Call to order

1. Selectboard

- a. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard Meeting of November 6th to order at 8:15AM

2. Trustees

- a. Chair Seton Mcilroy called the Trustee Meeting of November 6th to order at 8:15AM

B. Additions or Deletions from the posted Agenda – None

C. Discussion

FY27 Budgets and Department Overviews

Fire/EMS

Fire Chief David Green reported on the Fire/EMS department's current status and needs. He noted that while their staffing continues to decrease, they had several positive developments: a staff member graduating as a paramedic who is now fully trained and certified, with another student currently in training expected to be done by spring. The department recently switched to a private ambulance billing company, which is working well despite a learning curve. They anticipate increased revenue due to the company's more effective collection methods.

Chief Green reported they had signed a contract with Efficiency Vermont for a load management system for their heating system, which would reduce electricity costs at the fire station, with all costs covered by a grant from Efficiency Vermont.

The ambulance ordered three years ago, originally expected two years ago, should arrive in January or February 2026. The truck being replaced has over 110,000 miles on it.

For the upcoming budget cycle, Chief Green proposed investigating collections for unpaid ambulance services, noting they have been running about \$100,000 in unpaid funds annually. A collection company would keep about 6-8% of what they collect.

Chief Green emphasized the staffing challenges, with no local volunteers joining in three years, despite recruitment efforts. He indicated he would need to increase full-time staffing as they are at a "tipping point" with decreasing volunteer numbers and aging volunteers.

The department plans to replace Engine 3 and will present budget figures for that in the future. The timeline between ordering and delivering an engine is typically 4-5 years, though no payment is made until delivery.

Police

Interim Chief Chris O'Keeffe reported on the Police Department's accomplishments and needs. Positive developments included replacing a problematic cruiser (expected to be picked up the following week), replacing old and outdated equipment, achieving full certifications for all full-time officers with the final officer graduating just before Thanksgiving.

Areas needing attention included increased training for mental health awareness, website modernization, and increased cooperation with other departments for consolidated training.

Budget increases would be required for the immediate replacement of their camera system, including body cameras and in-car cameras that are literally falling apart. The new Axon system would cost \$21,000 per year for five years, providing wraparound care and cloud-based evidence management. The Interim Chief also increased the communications budget by a couple thousand dollars due to costs associated with providing officers with iPhones for evidence collection and communication, now connected to Starlink for better coverage in remote areas.

Public Works

The new Director of Public Works, Greg Fullerton provided a brief overview of his initial observations. He identified significant needs for updated tools and equipment. He mentioned broken chainsaws that are 20 years old and several trucks needing snow tires.

Greg Fullerton reported the department is waiting for a truck that was supposed to have already arrived, and they're waiting on a quote for a grader. He also mentioned the need to replace the sludge truck, which won't pass inspection due to a rusting double frame and cab.

He noted staffing challenges, with a need for another person in the Village and potentially another person shared between Village and Town highway Departments.

Community Development and Planning

Stephanie Appelfeller reported that the department name had been changed from "zoning" to "Community Development and Planning" to move away from negative connotations. Major changes included putting Molly Maxham in charge of Town Zoning administration and Emily Collins in charge of Village Zoning Administration. The Department switched to a cheaper short-term rental software, saving about \$20,000, which should be operational by year's end.

The department has been working on Village Bylaw analysis with Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. Over the next year, they will work on Town Plan rewriting, with a focus on housing development. Stephanie Appelfeller requested maintaining the department at three people to allow adequate time for planning. She also mentioned the need for more robust permitting software.

Finance

Robert Densmore, the Finance Director, discussed efficiency improvements, including adding modules for fixed assets and accounts receivable to their accounting software. These improvements allow better tracking of invoices and revenue in real time.

All four funds ended the year with a surplus. The Department is working on a capital plan to better manage future replacement of vehicles and large equipment. Robert noted a large-scale water meter replacement throughout the system to improve efficiency in meter reading and billing, with potential for radio-read meters that would dramatically reduce reading and billing processing time. He mentioned exploring staffing additions, potentially a Town Hall-wide administrative position to handle ordering, envelope stuffing, and serving as a forward-facing person during tax time and sewer/water payment periods.

Assessors

Kathy Avellino reported that the Assessors' office budget has decreased due to reducing from three staff to two. A reappraisal is upcoming with mailings starting in the next couple of weeks. The Assessors have grown the grand list by \$15 million in 2024 and \$14 million this year through new homes, garages, updates, and property assessments. The office is working with Community Development to streamline their systems for better tracking of completed projects.

Town Clerk

Charlie Degener reported that his office continues to scan and index land records, with documents digitized back to 1935. They are working with the history center to image older bound volumes. He noted that the state implemented a new voter registration system which has transitioned smoothly. This year has been quiet for elections, but next year will include Town Meeting, the Statewide Primary in August, and the November general election.

He mentioned physical constraints of the office space as an ongoing challenge, noting that after 17 years in a small space, the vault is getting increasingly crowded. Eric Duffy mentioned that Stephanie Appelfeller has been working with contractors to see if they can build out more offices in the existing space.

Selectboard Updates

Wastewater Plant Project

The Town has decided to move forward with a bond vote at March Town Meeting for the Wastewater Plant. Tours of the Wastewater Plant Facility will be held on November 15th from 10 AM to 2 PM to show residents the condition of the facility and the need for a new

one. Public forums will be scheduled to discuss why this infrastructure is necessary for the Town and its benefits for Woodstock as a whole.

School Committee Chair Meeting

Ray Bourgeois and Susan Ford met with three members of the School Board to discuss common issues. They reported a spirit of collaboration and a shared goal of keeping Woodstock strong and building the economic base while supporting local families. Keri Bristow from the School Board expressed appreciation for the conversation and desire for continued involvement between boards.

Keri Bristow reported that the Senate Education Committee will visit the school on November 18th to tour the facility, observe classes, and hold an open session at 3 PM for public comments and questions. She encouraged board members to attend to demonstrate support.

Votes (Selectboard)

Letter of Support: Woodstock School System

Laura Powell presented a draft letter of support for the Woodstock School System, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a Middle School and High School in Woodstock. Following suggestions from board members and public comments, the letter was amended to acknowledge that the school serves 28 communities beyond Woodstock. The letter expresses support for keeping the school in Woodstock but does not specifically support the bond.

Several citizens commented in support of the school letter, with appreciation for the board's action on this important community issue.

Motion: by Vice Chair Susan Ford to approve the letter of support for the Woodstock School System as amended. (9:58AM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

D. Citizen Comments – Three Minutes per participant

Jessica Kirby mentioned her support for keeping the school in Woodstock, and the Selectboard action in writing the letter of support.

Roger Logan thanked Eric Duffy and the Town staff for their thoughtful presentations balancing needs, efficiency, and costs. He also expressed support for the consideration of ambulance service collections, suggesting clear communication and payment plan options to mitigate negative perceptions.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were tabled

E. Adjournment

Motion: by Vice Chair Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (10:02AM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to adjourn the meeting at (10:02AM)

Seconded: by Frank Horneck

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar

Raymond Bourgeois

Susan B. Ford

Keri Cole

X

J Kahn

Frank Horneck

Lisa lawlor

Brenda Blakeman

Greg Fullerton

Signature: Raymond Bourgeois

Raymond Bourgeois (Dec 6, 2025 14:55:59 EST)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 

Email: lpowell@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 

DPW (Dec 8, 2025 15:27:17 EST)

Email: dpw@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 

UnicornVT (Dec 5, 2025 17:39:18 EST)

Email: unicornvt@gmail.com

Signature: Lisa Lawlor

Lisa Lawlor (Dec 5, 2025 12:46:49 EST)

Email: llawlor@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Susan B. Ford

Susan B. Ford (Dec 6, 2025 19:27:47 EST)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 

Ker Cole (Dec 6, 2025 14:02:11 EST)

Email: kpcole@gmail.com

Signature: E. Seton L. McIlroy

E. Seton L. McIlroy (Dec 5, 2025 13:54:33 EST)

Email: smcilroy@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 

Frank Horneck (Dec 7, 2025 08:11:25 EST)

Email: fhorneck@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Brenda Blakeman

Brenda Blakeman (Dec 5, 2025 18:59:12 EST)

Email: bblakeman@townofwoodstock.org